

Top Secret



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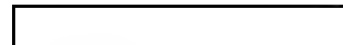
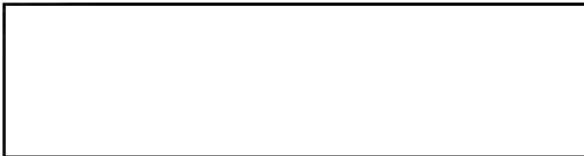
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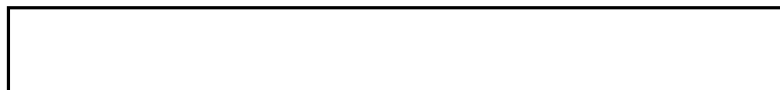


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CUBA-PANAMA: Move toward diplomatic relations. (Page 5)



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CUBA-PANAMA: Negotiations on establishing diplomatic relations between Cuba and Panama will begin this week while Foreign Minister Roa is attending the UN Security Council session.

Informal ties between the two nations have become increasingly close over the past year, but Castro probably wants formal relations in order to maintain the momentum he has achieved in expanding Cuban relations with other Latin American nations. In addition, he probably hopes to influence the OAS General Assembly which is expected to review the Cuban issue next month. Although he is not interested in rejoining the OAS, he would like to see a strong showing against the US-supported sanctions policy. This would represent a significant victory in Cuba's efforts to expand its contacts in the hemisphere.

Torrijos would see the establishment of diplomatic relations as the formalization of a growing friendship.

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there have been increasing contacts on educational, athletic, and cultural levels. Torrijos may see tactical advantages to a permanent Cuban presence in Panama City, despite the advice of his general staff to avoid too close an alignment with "leftist" regimes.

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